

April 3, 2008

Major General Rick Lynch, USA
Commanding General
Multi-National Division – Center
3rd Infantry Division

Dear General Lynch:

I write this letter as an appeal for clemency for Sergeant Evan Vela, a constituent from the state of Idaho assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

I have been in contact with members of Sergeant Vela's family and members of his community throughout this court battle. Like them, I am concerned with the circumstances surrounding this case. According to my constituents, Sgt. Vela followed an order from his superior on the reasonable premise that his unit's position would be compromised. Among the co-accused, Sgt. Vela has received the harshest punishment. I am concerned that he is playing the role of scapegoat in a series of tragedies in a time of war. In addition to conflicting accounts of the rules of engagement, I also have strong concerns over reports of Sgt. Vela's physical and mental conditions at the time of the incident. There are a number of mitigating factors and extenuating circumstances in this case that make a compelling argument for clemency, and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, I urge you to consider those factors and circumstances in your post-trial review.

I sincerely appreciate your attention and consideration of this request for clemency for Sgt. Evan Vela of St. Anthony, Idaho.

Sincerely,

Mike Simpson
United States Representative
MS: AS